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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the Maryland State Department of Education has made a great effort to improve teacher education programs and teacher certification in the state. Since 1971, the State Department of Education has evaluated and accredited teacher education programs at 21 of 22 colleges and universities on the basis of program approval rather than "credit counting." A program approval approach lends itself to defining competencies expected of a prospective teacher. The State Department of Education has initiated a series of workshops and seminars to assist colleges, public school systems, and classroom teachers in exploring the possibility of preparing and certifying teachers based on performance as well as on education and knowledge. In addition to providing information and demonstrations of performance-based teacher education, these activities have generated discussion on defining areas of competency. (JA)

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A SUMMARY

of

COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

and

RELATED ACTIVITIES IN MARYLAND

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ACTIVITIES IN MARYLAND IN CBTE

Improved teacher education programs and teacher certification processes are central to the pursuit of the Maryland State Department of Education's goal of improved teacher education effectiveness and the resultant benefits to students.

Traditionally, the student's completion of a specified number of academic and professional courses, together with a rather limited teaching experience, has served as a basis for the awarding of a degree by a college of education and the issuance of a teaching certificate by the State. Thus, teacher qualification has been evaluated by reviewing course titles on college transcripts.

Since 1971 the Maryland State Department of Education has evaluated and accredited teacher education programs at 21 of 22 colleges and universities on the basis of program approval rather than "credit counting." This system of accreditation emphasizes the inclusion of certain predetermined concepts and experiences in the overall program of teacher preparation. It also stresses the importance of the relationships among the various courses which comprise the program. The program approval approach provides for program flexibility and the opportunity for the colleges to move from traditional teacher education programs which have been restricted by certification requirements to programs which can define more specific outcomes for its students in a continuous set of related and interrelated experiences combining theory and practice. Consequently, colleges developing programs for teachers will not be identical.

A program approval approach lends itself to defining competencies expected of a prospective teacher. The Maryland State Department of Education has encouraged colleges and public school systems to cooperatively look at the preparation of teachers based on a competency approach, i.e., what competencies are needed by the prospective teacher to perform well in the classroom.

A survey of faculty members of the twenty-two Maryland institutions of higher education which prepare teachers revealed the need and the interest to learn more about competency based teacher education (CBTE). To assist colleges, public school systems, and others in exploring the possibility of preparing and certifying teachers based on performance as well as on education and knowledge, the Maryland State Department of Education has undertaken workshops and seminars to provide background and information for educators. Thus, in February of 1972 the first workshop in CBTE was held at Saint Joseph College. Seventy-five educators convened for a weekend to learn about the concept of competency-based teacher education (CBTE) or performance based teacher education (PBTE). At

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that time the following definition of CBTE was used as a frame of reference: A competency-based (or performance based) teacher education program is a program in which the competencies to be acquired by the student and the criteria to be applied in assessing these competencies are made explicit and the student is held accountable for meeting those criteria.

This workshop was just the beginning of Maryland teacher educators' involvement in the whole process of CBTE. Workshop experiences were designed to give participants the skill to write performance objectives and to develop criteria for assessment of performance in each area of the curriculum. In addition, brainstorming sessions resulted in ideas and possible models for a CBTE program for preparing teachers.

Recognizing that the interest of Maryland educators was high concerning CBTE, the Maryland State Department of Education planned, organized, and undertook a series of seminars to look at CBTE in-depth and to involve many more educators. All school systems and colleges in Maryland were invited to send teams of people to participate in a series of seminars to develop the idea of CBTE and work toward its implementation. Obviously, CBTE had merit in what it had to offer since 125 people responded and committed themselves to participate in six seminars once a month for six months. These sessions began in November 1972 and concluded in April 1973.

The first seminar, "A Theoretical Model of Competencies", emphasized the need to define the term "competency" and revealed the misconceptions surrounding the notion of competence which means different things to different people.

The second seminar treated the topic, "The Process of Competency Identification", which involved participants in the arduous task of attempting to write a competency statement and to analyze this in terms of group agreement. Dodl's list of competencies which were developed in cooperation with teachers, administrators, and college personnel in Florida served as a guide.

In attempts to bring about some agreement of thinking the third seminar on "Identification of Competencies in the Curriculum Areas" involved teacher educators in defining competency statements in their curricular areas of expertise.

One approach to building competence in a CBTE program is to develop modules or units of experiences in which specific outcomes are defined for students and where criteria for the assessment of competence are included. The fourth seminar "Building Self-Instructional Modules" involved participants in the actual writing of modules which could be used by the writers in their areas.

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The fifth session of the seminars, "Implementing a CBTE Program," brought together the participants in regions which they represented in the State into simulated consortia or groups of cooperating institutions, to set forth a beginning model for implementing CBTE.

During the last meeting of this series, the teacher education staff of the Maryland State Department of Education finalized the program by getting the participants together from various regions of the State, i.e., Western Maryland, Eastern Shore, Southern Maryland, and the Greater Baltimore area, to plan cooperatively for future development if they, the participants, felt that CBTE was an idea to promulgate. The State consultants will continue to assist and encourage those who are interested.

These seminars revealed the difficulty in defining areas of competency and the problem of coming to some base of agreement as to specific competencies of teachers which should be developed through undergraduate teacher education programs. Therefore, the Maryland State Department of Education invited 50 elementary and 50 secondary classroom teachers to separate day-long workshops in attempts to identify competencies needed by teachers in working with students and others. These sessions were fruitful for the participants and the State; however, these sessions further affirmed the difficulty in attempting to treat broad areas of competence in terms of specifics. A summary of these two sessions with teachers is given in a paper on competency identification.

In the last year and a half, the Maryland State Department of Education has explored the competency based, or performance-based, approach in the preparation of teachers as an alternative approach to improve teacher competence. Such an approach, it is hoped, can be a way to aid in bridging the gap between theory and practice and in providing the State more competent teachers.

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COMPETENCY IDENTIFICATION FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND

Describing very specifically what teaching is, what teachers do, how they do it, and at what level of proficiency they should carry out their roles is a very difficult task. However, when one looks at the results of a series of sessions to identify competencies which students should gain through their teacher education experiences, one discovers that both elementary and secondary teachers hold many common views about teaching.

A recent study by the Maryland State Department of Education reveals that public elementary and secondary school teachers identify very similar competencies, and they rank broad areas of concern in a similar order of priority.

Two workshops were conducted, one with elementary and one with secondary classroom teachers. Each workshop was conducted by an independent consultant who did not relate to the session conducted by the other; therefore, there could be no influence of one group upon the other.

The teachers, who came from 11 Maryland public school systems and were members of both the teachers' union and the teachers' association, were assembled on two different days and asked to identify broad areas of competence. These teachers, who had all served as cooperating teachers supervising the work of student teachers, were asked to use the following definition of competence: large categories of specifically describable knowledge, skills, and behaviors enabling a teacher to perform effectively. Through a series of small group brainstorming sessions, two very similar lists were developed by both the elementary and secondary classroom teachers.

The categories identified were:

Elementary Teachers	Secondary Teachers
1. Management	1. Management
2. Diagnosis and Prescription	2. Diagnosis and Prescription
3. Human Relationships	3. Human Relation Skills
4. Planning	4. Planning
5. Evaluation	5. Flexibility
6. Child Growth and Development	6. Communication
7. Content	7. Evaluation
8. Communication	8. Content

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Elementary Teachers Con't.

9. Creativity
10. Motivation
11. Counseling
12. Teaching Strategies
13. Reinforcement Skills
14. Stamina
15. Conferencing Skills

Secondary Teachers Con't.

9. Child Growth and Development
10. Creativity
11. Motivation
12. Counseling
13. Conferencing
14. Teaching Strategies
15. Stamina
16. Reinforcing Skills.

The similarity of these two lists is striking.

The second process in these competency identification activities was a regrouping and refining of categories, by adding, deleting, and revising the original list. As a final activity, in the day-long workshops, both elementary and secondary teachers were asked to arrive at a consensus of priority rankings for the categories they had identified. The following are the categories and rankings developed by the two groups:

Elementary Teachers

1. Human Relations
2. Program Development
3. Classroom Organization
4. Teaching Learning Process
5. Teacher Characteristics
6. Professional Growth

Secondary Teachers

1. Personal Characteristics
2. Human Relation Skills
3. Instructional Skills
4. Background-content
5. Professional Improvement

The above listings are just the beginning in the difficult task of identifying competence necessary for successful teaching. For example, what knowledges, skills, abilities, and sensitivities are needed by the teacher to perform his tasks well in the specific competencies needed in each of the broad categories above? The real core of such a problem needs the cooperative venture of many to extend and develop what has been started.